

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

by Bruce Barrett

Bountiful Bay

Her fingers curled over the tiller to touch the little ridge beneath it. She sensed her slightest movement right or left – starboard or port – and held her course over Duxbury Bay like an arrow through the wind, steady as she goes. Eager for her first race ever, she had pushed her sloop over the start line too soon, seconds before the gun. In the sailor's tradition of sportsmanship, she turned back to re-cross the line, and so trailed the skippers who had made a fair start. Ned Lawson crewed for the youngster, adding his cunning and knowledge of local waters to the girl's steady hand.

Ned runs the Duxbury Bay Maritime School (DBMS), a steady hand of his own steering the school into its seventh season and launching the annual Opening of the Bay festivities Friday and Saturday, May 28th and 29th at the Duxbury waterfront off Washington Street. H.M.S. Bounty, the 180-foot tall ship built in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, will serve as flagship. The original Bounty took Captain William Bligh to a life of mutiny and ignominious death; Bligh to an unparalleled 3,600 mile voyage to safety with 18 loyal sailors in a 23-foot open boat. Even today, H.M.S. Bounty attracts brilliant seamanship – Harbormaster Don Beers will guide her up to Duxbury's Town Pier, and get her out again.

The lessons of the sea, so to speak, run deep and wide.

At DBMS, Ned says, "We believe in building connections with Duxbury Bay for everyone, regardless of age, ability, finances, or anything else. Anyone can benefit from the lessons the Bay has to teach us."

Self-reliance, teamwork, meeting new challenges, directly experiencing the fragile yet powerful forces of the Bay's marine ecology, the fun of learning to sail – all these and more make DBMS programs rich in their own right, and deeply enriching in the lives of participants beyond their experience on the water. ACCESSAIL (Matt Glauber, Director) extends the Bay's lessons to disabled sailors, adult or youth, with specifically designed boats, a handicap lift and staff committed to both Special Olympics and Unified Sports standards. It was a unified sports-style regatta last September that paired Ned Lawson with the eager young woman who steered so well that she worked her way forward through the fleet to win that first race.

Duxbury Clipper May 26, 2004

Camp Wing's Maritime Adventures Program – offered to the Duxbury camp by DBMS free of charge – brings some 60 underprivileged kids to six weeks of the sea, from sailing, rowing, and marine ecology to ocean kayaking, shell-fishing, and more. Camp Wing Director Jeff Rumpf says the program is a major attraction for campers entering their teens, an age when Camp might otherwise seem un-cool. Would a one-time experience make a difference to a youth under pressure? Probably, but the reality is even better. Camp Wing (Crossroads for Kids) reaches out to the campers throughout the year – a permanent presence in their lives – and Duxbury Bay takes care of the rest. They want to go sailing again.

No one wants to grab the credit for conceiving the Camp Wing – DBMS collaboration, but everyone agrees that Marsh and Missy Carter, as Ned put it, "first breathed life into it." Through the State Street Bank Foundation, then through their own generosity, the Carters footed the bill that is now covered through other grants and donations. Listen to Ned Lawson speak about such things, though, and you'll know exactly where the idea started.

"Duxbury Bay," he says, "has lessons to teach us all." Even a sightless girl, who could hold her course by the touch of her fingers, and steer to victory like an arrow in the wind.

